APOLOGY STRATEGIES USED IN READER’S LETTER
BY COMPLAINEE ON *KOMPAS DAILY CYBER-NEWS*
ISSUED FROM JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2009

A THESIS
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Completion of the Undergraduate Program in Linguistics at the English Department

Submitted by
ARI NURYANTO
NIM A2B 005 051

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2010

PRONOUNCEMENT
The researcher of this thesis truthfully declares that this work is conducted with no courtesy of other existing researches aimed to pursue any degrees or diplomas that have already become a literary of a university or such. Then, as far as the researcher knows and believes, this thesis does not include materials from publication or other writing except those that have been mentioned as the references.

Semarang,
Ari Nuryanto

MOTTO
TRIBUTE

This thesis is dedicated to sciences, especially in linguistics; to the people who are always there for me and giving invaluable supports without asking something in return, namely:

The Honest Father (Saelan), who never stops giving me advices and always prays for my excellences.

The Honest Mother (Nurcahyani), along my “boulevard”, her love is beyond measure.

The Sweetest Sister (Fitri Ariyanti), for whom I learn to be a better person in every single moment of my life.

APPROVAL

This thesis entitled Apology Strategies Used in Reader’s Letter by Complainee on KOMPAS Daily Newspaper Issued from January to September 2009 has been approved by the Academic Supervisor in Semarang on ______________, _________________________ at Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University.

Academic Supervisor,

Drs. Mualimin, Dip.TESL, M.Hum.
NIP 19611110 198710 1 001

VALIDATION

This thesis entitled Apology Strategies Used in Reader’s Letter by Complainee on KOMPAS Daily Newspaper Issued from January to September 2009 has been validated by the Thesis Examination Board in Semarang on ______________, _________________________ at Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University.

Thesis Examination Board

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

Chairman,
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Accomplishing such an important yet difficult work as this thesis and achieving satisfying graduation constitute researcher’s biggest dreams. The process of completing this thesis has put the researcher in a stressful situation which is full of challenges and barriers. However, the researcher tried to stay strong and positive as well as to work hard with high determination so as to make these dreams come true. This thesis has finally come to its completion. All of these experiences have added valuable lessons to the researcher since it was hardly possible to have this work finished. The researcher fully realizes that there are a number of important individuals whose supports and guidance have contributed to the completion of this thesis and to whom the researcher should be grateful. Amongst them are:

1. Allah Azza Wajalla, who always enlightens the researcher with His light and grants him with merciful grace,
2. The Dean, Prof. Dr. Nurdien H. Kistanto, M.A. and Dean Assistants,
3. Drs. Mualimin, Dip.TESL, M.Hum, from whom the researcher always received precious advices. Despite the complex role as the Head of English Department Program, handling busy classes in the current semester, and his responsibility of being a father and husband in her family, Mr. Mualimin always had time to give answer to the researcher’s questions,
4. Mrs. Dra. Deli Nirmala, M.Hum. who taught him to propose the best thesis,
5. Mr. Arido Laksono, S.S, M.Hum. as the academic advisor who gave all the better clearance in every subject which the researcher took,
6. Mrs. Wijayanti, Mrs. Naimah, and other Academic Administration Staff. Of course, the better personal relationship and respect of us can strengthen the cooperation in administration process. The researcher really appreciates the ‘exception’ given,
7. The brotherhood of Iwan Satya Nugraha, Aditya Indratna, Arie Widodo Subagio, Kharisma Hilmi Rasyidi, Hafidz Sajda Ambiya, Galihr Prasojo, Nunung Setyo A.P.S., and Achmat Qomarudin. The researcher extends his gratitude to you for kindness, thesis writing construction, many supporting books, and soft data as references in this thesis writing,
8. The researcher’s boarding members: Chandra Bayu, Nova Triyono, Awet Abadi, Ayip Sutrisno, Zainal Khumaidi, Pratama Yoga Nugroho, Amin Musyaffa Rahman, Aditya Setiaji
Wibowo, Dadan Ramdani, and Rudy Hendro Prasetyo. The researcher is grateful to you for the internet facilities and computer system.

Akin to other novice works, the researcher believes that his writing is still way too far from perfection. There may be found many drawbacks and weaknesses in the composition. Thus, comments, critiques, and suggestions are always welcomed for the purpose of betterment.

Semarang, 20th August 2010

Ari Nuryanto

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS
M : Minimizing
QP : Querying Precondition
IA : Implicit Acknowledgement
IE : Implicit Explanation
EE : Explicit Explanation
ER : Expression of Regret
OA : Offer of Apology
PF : Promise of Forbearance
OR : Offer of Repair

LIST OF CODE
Ma : Minimizing number a
QPa : Querying Precondition number a
IAM : Implicit Acknowledgement number a
IEa : Implicit Explanation number a
EEa : Explicit Explanation number a
ERa : Expression of Regret number a
OAa : Offer of Apology number a
PFa : Promise of Forbearance number a
ORa : Offer of Repair number a

• Caps Lock letter shows the abbreviation of apology category name.
• Little letter shows the number of sentences or expressions which include specific category of apology.

ABSTRAK
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction is the first chapter in which the readers and researcher begin their understanding of this thesis. The introduction starts from the background of the research as the reason why the researcher chooses the topic of the research. Then, several purposes and the scope of the research will be presented to strengthen the background of the study. After that, the underlying theory will be presented to help the readers understand the basic of this thesis. This thesis is based on the theory by Trostborg. That theory, then, is combined with methodology of the research to analyze and discuss data research. Finally, the organization of the thesis will be presented to show the overall of writing systematically.

A. Background of the Research

Indeed, various forms of functional texts, such as message, information, announcement, criticism, complaint, and response can be presented both in spoken and written language, but nowadays, people need ease, simplicity, and accuracy although they are in the distance. Those needs can be completed by electronic devices, furthermore the electronic devices which are equipped by internet and intranet; even, the printed media which is usually used, now begin to transform into electronic media. This condition makes the researcher easier find out the research media in collecting the data research which relate to functional texts, especially the response of complaint.

To specify the choosing of research media, the researcher only points the newspaper, actually, the newspaper which is published at the website via internet. It is called as cyber-news. In this category of cyber-news, Kompas is the most popular website of news in Indonesia. The next reason, those functional texts are easily often found inside that cyber-news, especially in Reader’s Letter (Surat Pembaca) column. In that column, readers are permitted to share their ideas by writing an announcement, criticism, complaint, and response. It means people or institutions to whom the criticism or complaint are addressed can respond the senders by writing in the same column. That condition is called two-way communication. Other reason, without intricate administration of institutions, the researcher achieves the responses letter which may be in private cases. In that responses letter, the researcher is interested to find out and to discuss some apology strategies.

Due to characteristics of human being and the various strength level of defense to face the complaints, there are various kinds of apologizer. The researcher often found the complainee who is able to deny the complaint, who accepts the complaint, and who includes between those two categories. That variety automatically results in various strategies which are used to apologize. Seldom complainee uses only one strategy, but it can solve the complaint. In the other fact, often complainee uses four strategies, but it cannot solve the complaint. Based on those phenomena thereof, the researcher is interested in analyzing the apology strategies used in Reader’s Letter about the response on Kompas daily cyber-news.

B. Purposes of the Research

In the light of the reasonable arguments, it should be clear that there are objectives of the research. Firstly, the researcher is interested in figuring out the apology strategies pattern which is used in the responses of complaint on Reader’s Letter in Kompas daily cyber-news. Secondly, the researcher is eager to identify the kinds of sentences used in those strategies.

C. Scope of the Research

This research focuses on strategies of apology which are used by the complainee in the responses of complaints on Reader’s Letter in Kompas daily cyber-news issued from January to
September 2009. It means that these apology strategies are used out of politeness basic where people do apologizing for being polite. The researcher analyzes and classifies them into five basic types of using apology strategies which are proposed by Trosborg.

D. Underlying Theory

The main theory is specific theory of apology which is stated by Trosborg. Trosborg stated in her book *Interlanguage Pragmatics: request, complaint, and apologies* (1994) that people can restore a complaint by performing direct and indirect apology. Likewise, Trosborg argues that complainer often meets apologizer who has strong defense of arguments and enough evidence to counter attack the complainer. It means the potential apologizer can deny the responsibility of complaint. Furthermore, Trosborg also explains the strategies for performing that apology in five strategies: opting out, evasive strategies, indirect strategies, direct strategies, and remedial support. Of course, they have some sub-strategies which make the researcher easier in classifying the strategies.

E. Methodology of the Research

This research is classified into qualitative research. It does not deal with the testing of a theory or hypothesis, but it deals with understanding of theory (Hadi, 2001:23). In this research, the theory focuses on apology strategies therefore the content of this theory has to be understood clearly by the researcher. Other research classification, this research is classified into descriptive research. It is the study in which the researcher needs to collect and analyze data to get conclusion. It does not deal with numeric data or variable and its relationship (Hadi, 2001:17). From that theory, the researcher describes a linguistic phenomenon: the strategies of apology at responses on Reader's Letter.

The population of this research is all the responses which are found in Reader’s Letter of *Kompas* in digital form of cyber-news. By using total sampling methods, the researcher analyzes all the samples. In collecting the data, the researcher uses one instrument of data collection, namely documentation. It is conducted by classifying the written materials that are related to the problem of the study (Soehartono, 1999:70). Then, the researcher uses informal method in presenting the data analysis.

F. Organization of the Thesis

The researcher organizes this thesis into the consecutive five chapters. Chapter I, Introduction, has regular terms including background of the research, purposes of the research, scope of the research, underlying theory, methodology of the research, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II, Review of Literature, composed of simple explanations and paraphrases of the theories of speech act, the speech act of apology, and apology strategies. Chapter III, Research Methods, conveys the methodology of the research comprising of a type of the research, method of data collection, population and samples, method of data analysis, and research procedures. Chapter IV, Data Analysis, as the core chapter, deals with the result of the research which describes the various types of apology strategies and other following explanation at the responses on Reader’s Letter. Chapter V, Conclusions, contains some conclusions of the discussions.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Literature is a chapter which has very important role in this thesis that mainly supports some theories as the basic law of data analysis and of result decision. This chapter contains theories which consist of main theory and supporting theory. In this chapter, the supporting theories are written previously as the introduction. The supporting theories include Speech Act Theory and Speech Act Apology. Preceding theory is the main theory by Trosborg. The researcher attempts to simplify the understanding of some theories thereof by paraphrasing and simple explanation.

A. Speech Act Theory

“Aspek tutur lainnya, selain konteks sebagaimana diungkapkan di depan, meliputi penutur dan lawan tutur, tujuan tutur, tuturan sebagai kegiatan tindak tutur, dan tuturan sebagai produk tindak verbal (Nadar, 2009:7)” The researcher knows that the hearer, “other”, or respondent of speech is someone who become a target of speech from the speaker or “self”. Respondent of the speech has to be differentiated from the respondent of speech who unintentionally comes in and listens across the messages; however he or she is not someone who is intentionally called by the speaker or “self”. The aim of utterance is what the speaker means in saying something or the meaning in that utterance. In pragmatics study, the speech could be understood as the type of speech act itself beside could be understood as product of the speech act.

The theory of speech act was originally introduced by Austin in 1955. In the speech act, utterance could be divided into constative utterances and performative utterances. Constative utterances are connected in some ways with events in possible world in which such position can be said to be true or false. Likewise, Austin in his well-known work How to Do Things with Words gives rise to a new point of view on language especially the term of performative utterances. He argues that in using performative utterances, a speaker is not just saying something, but he is also doing something. For supporting those statements, the researcher serves a theory from Austin; he claims “to say something is to do something, or in saying something we do something, and even by saying something we do something” (1955:90). All what we utter actually has a power which can change words, diction, and intonation into a movement. The idea is able to create the movement of speech organ, then, the speech organ which produce sound of utterances is able to make movement of both the speaker itself and the hearer.

Started from Austin’s theory of performative utterances, Searle (1975) developed a hypothesis that is not only performative verb which contains act meaning, but also all of utterances exactly have. Besides, developing his hypothesis, Searle divides the speech act into three different names; utterance act or locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Nadar speaks,

Examples of locution, illocution, and perlocution below could explain clearly:

**Locution**
1. He said to me, “Shoot her!” meaning by “shoot” shoot and referring by “her” to her.

**Illocution**
2. He urged (or advised, ordered, etc.) me to shoot her.

**Perlocution**
3. He persuaded me to shoot her.

In the classification of speech acts, Searle (in Trosborg, 1994:14-16) divides illocutionary acts into five kinds, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

1. Representatives
The aim of a speaker in performing representative illocutionary act is to commit him or herself to the belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true. The researcher shows some examples of representatives; blaming, admitting, informing, reporting, asserting, and telling.

2. Directives
In performing directives, the speaker tries to get the hearer to commit him or herself to some future course of action. Some illocutionary acts, such as suggesting, advising, warning, commanding, questioning, proposing, recommending, et cetera.

3. Commissives
There are some various degrees to some future course of action as the speaker’s commitment him or herself. It takes account of promising, threatening, swearing, accepting, committing, et cetera.

4. Expressives
Here, the speaker wants to express the speaker’s psychological state of mind about some attitude prior to action or state of affairs. Thanking, apologizing, complaining, and requesting are examples of expressive.

5. Declarations
Declarations need extra institutions of linguistic for their performance. It takes a priest to christen a baby, a judge to sentence a defendant, etc. For one thing, Ibrahim states that he divides the illocutionary acts into six categories; effectives, verdictives, constantives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgments; the two first are conventional not communicative and the four last are appropriate to the explanation of Austin and Searle (1993:14-15). The Searle’s classification is mentioned above and Austin’s classification is expositives, exercitives, commissives, and behabitives.

One controversial point is the classificatory basis of Searle’s approach. Although Searle’s theory of illocutionary acts is based on functional criteria, he takes “the complete sentence” as the characteristic grammatical form of the illocutionary act. While the notion of a sentence is a grammatical unit (referring to the formal system); a speech act is a pragmatic unit referring to a stretch of speech with a communicative function, and the speech act is considered the minimal unit of communication. In order to distinguish between linguistic elements which are context independent abstract notions and structure actually produced in speech situation, a distinction has been made between sentence and utterance (Habermas, 1981 in Trosborg, 1994:19). Sentences are linguistic units consisting of formal elements, whereas utterances are situated sentences, i.e. pragmatic units of communication. It is possible for two or more sentences to make up a single illocution, e.g. a number of sentences can form a single a statement or piece of communication and a recommendation, or a piece of advice can be so complicated that it is difficult to express in
a single sentence (Trosborg, 1994:19). That phenomenon also happens at the response of complaint. Often, the complainer alleges the complaint which is difficult to solve, needs more explanation, requires some evidences, and wants future commitment and decision. In that situation, complainee has to accomplish the complaint which is alleged to make a good condition or normal relation.

B. Speech Act of Apology

Apologizing includes expressive category of illocutionary act. “Expressive” is not only the name of illocutionary act, but also the content or the sense which comprises so as to be called as “expressive”. Even that name of “expressive” is changed into different name; it still has the same definition. The name “expressive” of illocutionary category which is written by Searle is changed into the name “acknowledgment” by Ibrahim. Ibrahim points out,

“Ibrahim also argues that acknowledgment has specific function for expression; expression of the speaker feeling about the hearer both in formal and informal situation. The expression thereof is not about limitations so as to people can share out all they feel. Yule says, “Expressives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow” (1996:53). It means that apologizing can be uttered in the response as the reaction of complaint.

Trosborg points out “apologies are expressive illocutionary act which can be differentiated from complaint, which are also expressive acts, by being convivial in nature” (1994:373). Appropriately, we have to know what apology first before going to the apology strategies. Another form of politeness strategy is apology. According to Hornby, the word apology is noun which has meaning a word or statement saying sorry for something that has been done wrong or that causes a problem (2000:59). In supporting the meaning of apology from Hornby, the researcher gives Trosborg’s statement, “If a person has been hurt, inconvenienced, or violated in some ways or other, his / her face must be restore and apology is called for” (1994:374). These definitions lead the researcher to think that the only moment or event when we make a wrong thing we have to use apology. It means that apologies typically occur post – event to restore harmony. Otherwise, in our life, we use apology not only when we make a mistake, but also when we are going to do a polite activity. Trosborg points out,

“The apologizer’s response has, therefore, a twofold aim: He/she must placate the complainer to restore social harmony and he/she must restore his/her own social status. A conflict between these two aims is likely to arise. Consequently, a complaint is not always followed by an apology. In turn, the recipient of an apology may or may not have been complaining” (1994:374-375).

In other words, apology is needed whether someone makes mistake or not because someone deals with others who might have been offended by our attitudes. It is assumed that we have two kinds of apology; apology for solving the complaint and apology for politeness. Holmes (1990) explains that apologies are different from compliment. Compliment focuses on the addressee’s positive face wants, whereas apologies focus on face redress associated with face threatening acts (FTA) or offences which have damage the addressee’s face in some respect. For
apology strategies, Brown and Levinson call it as negative politeness strategies.

We need some device or tools to know or to indicate the characteristics of that illocutionary acts. That device is called as Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFIDs). We can use performative verb, the order of words, stress, and intonation. Yule points out, “Most of the time, however, there is no performative verb mentioned. Other IFIDs can be identified are word order, stress, and intonation” (1996:49). It is different from phonology and phonetic which the sign of stress and intonation are written clearly; the researcher role in this case is very important because by reading and feeling those written and unwritten indication, the researcher has to know which of the sentences or utterances that include the data needed and has to understand how to analyze them.

C. Apology Strategies

Intentionally the researcher takes this long theory to make clearance of the basic theory of apology which the researcher uses. In her book Interlanguage Pragmatics: request, complaint, and apologies, Trosborg states,

“The restoration of a complainable may be perform directly by means of an explicit apology utilizing one of the verbs directly signaling apology (apologize, be sorry, excuse, etc.), or it can be done indirectly by taking on responsibility or giving explanations. A potential apologizer may find reasons to minimize the degree of offence. If the offence in question is a grave one, a verbal apology may be insufficient to restore the damage relationship.

Remedial strategies can take the form of verbal recompensations (apologies, explanations, etc.), or in more severe cases in which verbal remediation is insufficient, strategies attempting a remedy of the complainable may be required. An offer of repair is often required in cases in which a verbal apology is felt to be insufficient to restore social harmony. A promise for of forbearance relates to future behavior, and the strategy of expressing concern for the hearer server as an additional attempt to placate the complainer.

Although an apology is the act by means of which a complainee can restore his/her own social standing, the complainee maw refrain from performing this act. If the complainee apologizes, he/she accept the complainer’s criticism to the effect that he/she is o non – responsible social member, which is implied if not explicitly stated in all complaints. Instead, the potential apologizer may choose to deny responsibility” (1994:376-377).

So, if we or the agents want to satisfy the complainer we have to increase our or their potential ability in apologizing strategies. From that theories above, the researcher presents eight sub strategies for this apology which mostly used; Strategy 1-Opting out, Strategy 2-Minimizing the Degree of Offence, Strategy 3-Explanation or Account, Strategy 4-Acknowledgement of Responsibility, Strategy 5-Expression of Apology, Strategy 6-Expression Concern for Hearer, Strategy 7-Promise of Forbearance, and Strategy 8-Offer of Repair. Clearly, Trosborg theory contains two differences in categorizing the complainee; potential complainee and weak complainee. The potential complainee may deny the responsibility of complaint, but the weak complainee will accept the complaint then it will be called an apologizer. Specific to this first strategy below, the researcher proclaims that it is surely used by potential complainee. That is written only to show the differences of potential complainee from weak complainee theoretically. The other strategies are used by weak complainee or apologizer.

1. Opting Out

This strategy is used if the complainee or an apologizer denies the responsibility because
that person fell not guilty.

a. **Explicit Denial of Responsibility**

Explicitly, the complainee denies all of complainer’s statements and doesn’t take a responsibility.

(1) e.g. “I know nothing about it.”

b. **Implicit Denial of Responsibility**

The complainee may try to evade responsibility by ignore the complainer’s statements or talking about new topics.

(2) e.g. “I don’t think that’s my fault.”

c. **Justification**

The complainee gives some arguments to give certainty if the complainee can not be blame.

(3) e.g. “I’ve already finished my job yesterday, so there’s no reason I could be blamed about this.”

d. **Blaming Someone else**

In real, the complainee blames someone else both the third party and the complainer.

(4) e.g. “It wasn’t me, maybe you do it by yourself in purpose.”

e. **Attacking the Complainer**

The complainee attack the complainer seriously, in a pity, there is the complainer lacks of the defense.

(5) e.g. “I’m warning you! You can’t blame me for this trouble.”

2. **Evasive Strategies**

a. **Minimizing the Degree of Offence**

The complainee commits his responsibility, but the complainee tries to minimize his fault by giving some arguments, querying preconditions, and blaming someone else. Blaming someone else here is different from strategy at 1d. Here, the complainee does not admit responsibility and the complainer just is the third party.

1) **Minimizing**

(6) e.g. “Oh, what does that matter, that’s nothing?”

2) **Querying Preconditions**

(7) e.g. “What is love then?” (In responding, “You don’t love me”)

3) **Blaming Someone else**

(8) e.g. “I believe another person also responsible to this problem.”

3. **Indirect Apologies**

a. **Acknowledgement of Responsibility**

In these indirect strategies, the complainee does not express at appearance his apologizing
to the complainer. Below, from low to high, the researcher presents the strategy level of blaming intensity which is accepted by the complainee.

1) Implicit Acknowledgement

(9) e.g. “Perhaps I shouldn’t have done it.”

2) Explicit Acknowledgement

(10) e.g. “I’ll admit I forgot to do it.”

3) Expression of Lack of Intent

(11) e.g. “I didn’t mean to.”

4) Expression of Self Deficiency

(12) e.g. “You know I’m bad at...”

5) Expression of Embarrassment

(13) e.g. “I feel so bad about it.”

6) Explicit Acceptance of the Blame

(14) e.g. “You’re right to blame.”

b. Explicit or Account

The complainee explains the situation which is happened truly. The complainee can explain implicitly and explicitly by adding direct expression of apology, such as sorry. Trosborg says that thus an explanation or an account serves as an “excuse” for a committed offence, whereas in a “justification” the complainee does not acknowledge that an offence has occurred (1994:380-381).

1) Implicit Explanation

(15) e.g. “Such things are bound to happen.”

2) Explicit Explanation

(16) e.g. “Sorry, I’m late, but my car broke down.”

4. Direct Apologies

The apologizer expresses the apology to the complainer directly. According to Searle (1969) in Trosborg (1994:381) that the IFID for the act of apologizing is also taken to be the verbs [Sic!] apologize, rather than expression involving the word sorry. Owen (1983:115) in Trosborg (1994:381) stated that historical evidence warns us against setting up apologies as illocutionary acts in their own rights, with expressions of regret, requests for forgiveness, and so on, regarded as “indirect”, i.e. in some sense subsidiary and derived ways of performing the same act. From those theories, the researcher gets three direct apologies.

a. Expression of Regret

(17) e.g. “I’m sorry.”

b. Offer of Apology
c. Request for Forgiveness

(19) e.g. “Please, forgive me.”

5. Remedial Support

From that phrase remedial support, the researcher knows that these strategies are used by the complainee when the situation cannot be controlled anymore. It means the complainee commits the responsibility and has no defense. In addition, the complainer attacks the complainee by some strong and factual arguments.

a. Expressing Concern for Hearer

The complainee tries to express his concern to the complainer’s condition, make a complainer’s certainty, and give fast answer appropriately.

(20) e.g. “I know this is very inconvenient, but I’ll let you know when it’s done.”

b. Promise of Forbearance

From strategy 5a, the researcher assumes that it contains a future acts; the acts solving which will be given at the future. In Trosborg (1994:383), Owen (1983:119) also stated that when apologizing the speaker takes responsibility by expressing regret, and he / she will be expected to behave in a consistent fashion and not immediately to repeat the act for which he / she has just apologized.

(21) e.g. “It won’t happen again, I promise.”

c. Offer of Repair

The complainee will repair as what the result of the damage. If the reparation is not possible to be done, the complainee will give some compensation.

1) Repair

(22) e.g. “I will pay for the cleaning.”

2) Compensation

(23) e.g. “You can borrow my dress instead.”

Glory is not the destiny of every human being, but of the chosen.

(Ari Nuryanto)

Forgive yourself, forgive others, get forgiveness from others; surely your life will change on the earth and in the sky.

(Ari Nuryanto)